

## Chapter 5, Consultations

**Federal - State Partnership:** The proposed action is the result of a partnership between the BLM and the State of New Mexico. Since the State has planning and operational responsibilities in parallel with the BLM which called for analyses concurrent with this EA, the State and BLM agreed to become “Joint Lead” agencies for this NEPA process. The two agencies have conducted public information and consultations as full partners.

### 5.1 Scoping

The NEPA “scoping process” is not normally conducted for EAs (normally being reserved for larger scale EIS analyses). Scoping was included in the process for this proposed project because of early public interest. Scoping is intended to involve the public, local governments, Indian Tribes, and other agencies in helping to identify issues that might be raised by any proposed federal action. At the initial stage of the process for this project, briefings were presented jointly by the State and BLM to the city governments of Socorro and TorC, and the Socorro and Sierra County Commissions. Comments were received during these briefings and carried forward through the public scoping meetings held in Socorro on April 5, 2000 and in TorC on April 6, 2000. Over 250 notices and invitations were mailed directly to individuals and groups with previous interest in either the specific project, or related activities in the region. Newspaper articles and announcements for the scoping meetings were published in Socorro, TorC, Albuquerque, and Las Cruces. Local newspapers in Socorro and TorC covered the meetings with prominent stories, and included information on how and where to submit comments. These comments are summarized in Appendix D. A number of issues were raised, which are addressed in the analyses of individual resources (Chapter 4).

No issues were raised by the Native American Tribes contacted concerning the proposed action. However, since interpretation of history and prehistory at the Center would involve interpretation of Piro Pueblo prehistory and history, telephone contacts were made with Isleta del Sur pueblo in El Paso, Texas. This pueblo includes descendants of the Piro Indians, who once lived in the Rio Grande valley in the vicinity of the proposed Center. The representative of the pueblo expressed interest in the Center and requested the opportunity to review interpretive material regarding the Piro.

### 5.2 Environmental Justice

According to the BLM strategic plan for environmental justice, there are three principles and policy objectives in addressing environmental justice:

- Analyze the fairness of benefits and costs to minority and low income

communities.

- Provide opportunities for meaningful involvement of minority and low income communities.
- Provide information on environmental risks and alternatives.

This proposed project would provide additional employment to residents of the study area. Some of these jobs would go to low-income individuals and/or minorities in the Economic Study Area. Socorro County has the lowest per capita income of the four counties of the lower Rio Grande in New Mexico (see Section 3.29). Thus, environmental justice objectives should be positively affected because of this project, and no minority or low income communities should be unfairly impacted.

## References Cited

Architectural Research Consultants, Inc. 1994, "El Viaje: A Planning Study For the Camino Real Interpretive Center."

Gabin, Vickie, and Lee E. Lesperance, 1977. "New Mexico Climatological Data. Precipitation, Temperature, Evaporation, and Wind. Monthly and Annual Means, 1850 - 1975." W.K. Summers and Assoc., Socorro, NM.

Tuan, Yi-Fu, Cyril E. Everhard, Jerod G. Waddison, and Ivan Bennett, 1973. "The Climate Of New Mexico." Revised edition. State Planing Office, Santa Fe, NM.

U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Socorro Resource Area, "Socorro Resource Management Plan," 1989.

**El Camino Real International Heritage Center  
Planning and NEPA Project Team**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Project Duties</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Address</b>
Kate Padilla	Joint Mgt. BLM, Socorro	BLM, Socorro	198 Neel Avenue NW, Socorro, NM 87801
Edson Way	Joint Mgt. NM OCA	NM Cultural Affairs	228 East Palace Ave., Santa Fe, NM 87501
Charles Carroll	NEPA Project Manager Cultural Resources, Native American Cons.	BLM, Socorro	198 Neel Avenue NW, Socorro, NM 87801
José Cisneros, Michael Taylor	State Monuments sections and review	NM State Monuments	P.O. Box 2087, Santa Fe, NM 87504
Doug Svetnicka	Public Affairs	NM Cultural Affairs	228 East Palace Ave., Santa Fe, NM 87501
Jody McSmith	Socorro Co. Manager Co. input and review	Socorro County	106 West Center, Socorro, NM 87801
Gary Whitehead	Sierra County Manager county input and review	Sierra County	110 North Date St., Suite 5, Truth or Consequences, NM 87901
Kevin Carson	Recreation, Visual	BLM, Socorro	198 Neel Avenue NW, Socorro, NM 87801
Stephen Fosberg	Proposed action sections	BLM, NMSO	P. O. Box 27115, Santa Fe, NM 87502-0115
Theresa Herrera	Public Affairs	BLM, NMSO	P. O. Box 27115, Santa Fe, NM 87502-0115
Wesley Anderson, David Heft	Wildlife/Sect 7	BLM, Socorro	198 Neel Avenue NW, Socorro, NM 87801
Jeanette Pranzo	Socio-Economics	BLM, Colorado SO	2850 Youngfield St., Lakewood, CO 80215
Joyce Fierro	International Coord.	BLM, NMSO	P. O. Box 27115, Santa Fe, NM 87502-0115
Kathy Gonzales	Project Tracking	BLM, Socorro	198 Neel Avenue NW, Socorro, NM 87801
Steve Jordan	Construction Review	BLM, NMSO	P. O. Box 27115, Santa Fe, NM 87502-0115
J.W. Whitney	Planning/NEPA Advisor	BLM, NMSO	P. O. Box 27115, Santa Fe, NM 87502-0115
Jeanette Espinosa or Clarence Hougland	R&PP Review	BLM, NMSO	P. O. Box 27115, Santa Fe, NM 87502-0115
Scott Archer	Air Quality	BLM, Denver	NARSC (RS140), P.O. Box 25407, Denver, CO 80225-0047
Clarence Seagraves	Soil, Water, Hazmat	BLM, Socorro	198 Neel Avenue NW, Socorro, NM 87801
Bill Sabatini, Amy Eichenberger	Architect, proposed action, buildings	Dekker, Perich, Sabatini	6901 Jefferson NE, Suite 100, Albuquerque, NM 87109
Jim Stovall	Rangeland Mgt	BLM, Socorro	198 Neel Avenue, Socorro, NM 87801
Roger Cumpian	T&E Plants	BLM, Socorro	198 Neel Avenue, Socorro, NM 87801
Brenda Wilkinson	Archeological Survey	BLM, Socorro	198 Neel Avenue, Socorro, NM 87801
Clay McDermit	BOR Planning sections	BOR, Albuquerque	505 Marquette NW, Albuquerque, NM

## **Appendix A**

### **Definitions and Criteria for Management of Surrounding Public Lands**

The alternatives for the management of surrounding public lands in support of the goals of the proposed Center were developed to consider future visual and audio effects upon the public lands portions of the surrounding landscape.

The Socorro (BLM) Right-Of-Way Avoidance Area Plan identifies approximately twenty locations on public lands which should be avoided by rights-of-way. The plan provides some flexibility and allows the authorized officer to modify the plan at any time. The plan did not foresee the development of this type of Center/Museum, which incorporates the landscape into its interpretive design, yet at the same time requires its own infrastructure, buildings, and utilities. Therefore, two new levels of right-of-way restrictions are defined here, which allow greater discretion to the authorized officer in determining whether various actions may be permitted in the future, consistent with the criteria and definitions below. Since the proposed Center would not be solely managed by the BLM, the authorized officer would take into account recommendations on approval or disapproval of proposed actions, on a case-by-case basis, by the board of directors of the proposed Center (if such a body exists), or its partner, the State Office of Cultural Affairs.

This RMPA/EA considers whether the Right Of Way Avoidance plan should be modified to include avoidance area(s) in support of the public purposes of the Center. In order to provide a basis for future management decisions on surrounding public lands, four alternatives were developed in addition to the “no action” alternative (which would be the continuation of existing management practices). If any of the alternatives other than “no action” are selected, the Socorro RMP and Avoidance Plan will be amended through this RMPA/EA process to reflect the changes in accordance with the following definitions and criteria:

#### **Critical Viewing Areas**

As noted in several sections of this RMPA/EA, some views to and from the proposed Center location are more important than others. These are defined as the “Critical Viewing Areas.” They consist of the view described above when viewed from the Center location, starting on the northeast horizon at the north slope of Mesa Contadero (Black Mesa), in an arc to the east and southeast, to the south slope of the Fra Cristóbal range. Photos 1 and 2 (pages 10 and 11) show parts of the critical viewing areas. Also considered part of the Critical Viewing Area is the corridor along the road leading to the site, bounded on the north by the rim of Simon Canyon, and on the south by the rim of Sheep Canyon (this can be best seen in the “Avoidance Level I Area” indicated on Alternative Map 3).

## **Secondary Viewing Areas**

Other areas of public lands which are visible from the proposed location of the Center would be important to the overall experience of visitors to the Center, but are at greater distances or in less critical directions, where visual intrusions may not be as significant, depending upon the type and location of proposed actions.

## **Unseen Areas**

The topography of the area includes many incised drainages and areas which are otherwise blocked from view from the proposed Center compound. These areas provide opportunities for locating rights-of-way, mineral materials pits (with consideration of noise potential), or other future activities requiring federal approvals where visual and noise intrusions upon the Center may be lessened or eliminated.

## **Levels of Stipulations**

All stipulations would include the provisions within the designated areas of limiting vehicle traffic to existing roads and trails, and exclusion from surface occupancy under gas and oil leasing.

Two levels of stipulations have been defined, Avoidance Level I and Avoidance Level II. The alternatives for management of surrounding public lands apply the definitions to different areas. The following definitions are intended to provide examples of types of actions which could be proposed in the future and how they would be addressed under these definitions. Since other technologies and industries may emerge in the future, these definitions are not meant to be exhaustive, but provide examples of the types of actions which future authorized officers may authorize or not, in consideration of their potential effects upon the goals of the Center.

**Avoidance Level I :** In areas that might be designated for Avoidance Level I, the BLM would reject upon application any proposed action which is determined to adversely affect the “Critical Viewing Areas” of the proposed Center. The recommendation of adverse or non-adverse effect of any proposed action would be made to the BLM authorized officer by the Board of Directors of the Center, if such a body is in place, or by the State/BLM partners, if no board exists. The following are examples of rights-of-way, leases, and permit requests which might be found to pose adverse effects: airport runways, pipelines larger than 2 inches in diameter, new roads larger than 15 feet in width, power lines larger than 14.4 KV, radio telescopes, communication/radio sites, and high profile/skylined water storage tanks, or similar structures. These and similar types of future proposals would likely be denied in the Avoidance Level I areas. The objective in Level I areas is to achieve VRM Level I standards (see definition below).

**Avoidance Level II :** In areas proposed for Avoidance Level II designation, the BLM would have flexibility to allow, (with seasonal use restrictions in accordance with the Socorro RMP, p.2-30), rights-of-way, leases, permits and requests which are found not to pose significant adverse effect upon the “Secondary Viewing Areas” of the proposed Center. As above, the recommendation of adverse or non-adverse effect of any proposed action would be made to the BLM authorized officer by the Board of Directors of the Center, if such a body is in place, or by the State/BLM partners, if no board exists. This level of designation is intended to allow considerable flexibility in permitting and siting future proposed actions in the “Secondary Viewing Areas,” on a case-by-case basis. The objective in Level II areas is to achieve VRM Level II standards (see definition below).

### **Geographic Alternatives For Management of Surrounding Public Lands**

All of the four alternatives for management of surrounding public lands are best understood by viewing the Alternative Maps. On these maps, possible Level II Avoidance areas are indicated by angled cross-hatching; possible Level I areas are indicated by dotted stippling. The differences between alternatives are in the size and location of the geographic areas assigned to either Avoidance Level I or II.

Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 include a Level I area parallel to Socorro County road 255 defined by the rims of canyons north and south of the road. The western boundary of all alternatives is parallel to the existing electrical transmission line right-of-way which parallels I-25 on the east in this area

Any actions involving structures or surface disturbing activities within Level II areas would be required to comply with VRM Class II management objectives. Actions within Level I areas would comply with VRM Class I management objectives (both are defined below). In both cases, all vehicle travel would be limited to existing roads and trails and no gas or oil leasing would occur.

A VRM Class I designation has the objective of preserving the existing character of the landscape. It does not preclude management activity, however the level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.

A VRM Class II designation indicates that changes in any of the basic elements (form, line, color, texture) caused by management activity should not be evident in the characteristic landscape. It applies to landscapes with Class “A” or “B” scenic quality in the foreground or middle ground zone with high visual sensitivity. Class “A” scenic quality involves unique or outstanding features; examples in this case would be Mesa Contradero, the Rio Grande bosque, and the Fra Cristóbal range. Class “B” scenic quality refers to outstanding features common to the physiographic region, such as the relatively natural creosote desert land forms. Under Class II management, the level of change

El Camino Real Center  
should be low, but management activities may be seen. Changes should not attract the attention of the casual observer.

All alternatives refer to management of federal public lands only.